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ACHILLES IN SCYROS

A

By the same Author, uniform with this Play.



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ACHILLES
IN SCYROS

BY

ROBERT BRIDGES
///

LONDON: G. BELL & SONS, LTD.

1913

PR4161
B75A24

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

| | | | |
|------------------|---|---|-------------------------------|
| <i>THETIS</i> | . | . | <i>Mother of Achilles.</i> |
| <i>ACHILLES</i> | . | . | <i>disguised as PYRRHA.</i> |
| <i>LYCOMEDES</i> | . | . | <i>King of Scyros.</i> |
| <i>ULYSSES</i> | . | . | <i>Prince of Ithaca.</i> |
| <i>DIOMEDE</i> | . | . | <i>companion of Ulysses.</i> |
| <i>ABAS</i> | . | . | <i>servant to Ulysses.</i> |
| <i>DEIDAMIA</i> | . | . | <i>daughter of Lycomedes.</i> |

CHORUS of SCYRIAN MAIDENS.

The scene is on the Island of Scyros, in the gardens of the palace.

Thetis prologises.

THETIS.

THE deep recesses of this rocky isle,
That far from undersea riseth to crown
Its flowery head above the circling waves,
A home for men with groves and gardens green,
I chose not ill to be the hiding-place
Of my loved son. Alas, I could not take him
To live in my blue caverns, where the nymphs
Own me for queen: and hateful is the earth
To me, and all remembrance, since that morn,
When, in the train of May wandering too far, 10
I trafficked with my shells and pearls to buy
Her fragrant roses and fresh lilies white.
Accurst the day and thou, ah, wretched Peleus,
Who forcedst me to learn the fears that women
Have for their mortal offspring: who but I,
Thetis, Poseidon's daughter, who alone
But I of all the immortals have known this,
To bear and love a son in human kind?
And yet not wholly ill is the constraint,
Nor do I pity mortals to be born 20
Heirs of desire and death, and the rich thought
Denied to easy pleasure in the days
That neither bring nor take; tho' more to me

ACHILLES

Embittered with foreknowledge of a doom
Threatened by fate, and labour how to avert.

For to me, questioning the high decrees
By which the sweetly tyrannous stars allot
Their lives and deaths to men, answer was given
That for my son Achilles there was ruled
One of two things, and neither good ; the better 30
A long and easy life, the worse a death
Untimely-glorious, which should set his name
First of the Greeks ;—for so must seem to me
Better and worse, so even an earthly mother
Had for him chosen, tho' for the right he died,
And conquered all the gods that succour Troy.—
But when I, thinking he must share my fear,
Showed him the choice, he made a mortal plunge
For glorious death, and would have straight gone forth
To seek it ; but in tenderness for me,— 40
Whom without shame he honours, and in this
My love repays,—he to my tears consented
To hide him from his fate ; and here he dwells
Disguised among the maidens like a maiden ;—
For so his beauty and youth permit,—to serve
The daughter of the king of this fair isle,
Who calls him Pyrrha for his golden hair,
And knowing not prefers him o'er the rest.
But I with frequent visitings assure me
That he obeys ; and,—for I have the power 50
To change my semblance,—I will sometimes run
In likeness of a young and timorous fawn
Before the maiden train, that give me chase
Far in the woods, till he outstrip them all ;
Then turn I quick at bay with loved surprise.

And bid him hail: or like a snake I glide
Under the flow'rs, where they sit at play,
And showing suddenly my gleaming eyes,
All fly but he, and we may speak alone.

Thus oft my love will lead me, but to-day 60

More special need hath brought: for on the seas
I met at dawn a royal ship of Greece
Slow stemming toward this isle. What that might bode,
And who might sail thereon, I guessed; and taking
A dolphin's shape, that thro' the heavy waters
Tumbles in sport, around the labouring prow
I gambolled, till her idle crew stood by
To watch me from the wooden battlements.

And surely among them there full soon I saw,
Even as I feared, the man I feared, agaze 70

With hypocrite eyes, the prince of Ithaca,
That searcheth for Achilles: of all the Greeks
Whom most I dread, for his own endless wiles,
And for Athena's aid. Him when I saw,
Lest I should be too late, I hither sped
To warn my son, and here shall meet him soon;
Tho' yet he hath not come; for on these lawns
The damsels of the court are wont to play,
And he with them. Hark! see! even now. Nay, nay.
Alas! who cometh thus? Ah, by that gait 80
Crouching along, it is my persecutor,
Ulysses. Woe is me! I must fly hence.
Tho' he should know me not, I fear to face him,
My hated foe, alert, invincible
Of will, full of self-love and mortal guile. [Exit.

Enter ULYSSES from the bushes, followed by DIOMEDE, who wears a Lion's skin.

DIOMEDE.

We have made the circuit of the hill, and here
Into the gardens are come round again.
What now?

ULYSSES.

Hush thou! Look there! Some one hath seen us.
He flies.

DIO. I see not.

UL. Where the myrtle tops
Stir each in turn. He goeth toward the shore. 90
I must see him that seeth me. Bide thou.

[Exit among the bushes.]

DIO. Were I a dog, now, I might learn. Heigh ho!
Two hours and more we have wandered on this
mountain,
Round and round, up and down, and round again,
Gardens, and lawns, meadows, and groves, and walks,
Thickets, and woods, the windings of the glades,
I have them all by rote. Each petty rill
We have tracked by rocky steps and paths about,
And peeped into its dank and mossy caves.
What sort of game should this Achilles be, 100
That we should seek him thus? Ah! back so soon?
What sport?

UL. (re-entering). Well hit. 'Twas but a milk-
white doe,
Some petted plaything of the young princess,
That fled our stranger steps.

DIO. And whither now
Turn we to seek Achilles?

UL. Hark, Diomedes:
My plot is laid and ready for thine ears.
Thou madest offer of thine aid; be patient,
And hear me:

DIO. I will hearken.

UL. First, thou knowest
How since the day the Danaan kings took oath
To avenge the wrong done by the Trojan Paris 110
Against his host, the Spartan Menelaus,
One oracle hath thwarted us, which said
Our purpose should not prosper with the gods
Unless Achilles the young son of Thetis
Should lead our armies.

DIO. Certainly, so far
I am with you.

UL. Next, when he was sought in vain,
Men looked to me; ay, and to me it fell
To learn that he was lurking in this isle
Of Scyros, in the court of Lycomedes.
The king denied the charge, adding in challenge, 120
That I might come and make what search I pleased:
Now mark . . .

DIO. I listen, but thou tellest nothing.
Why search we not the court if he be there,
Instead of this old hill?

UL. 'Tis that I come to.
King Lycomedes hath been one of those
Who have held their arms aloof from our alliance,
On the main plea of this Achilles' absence.
What if he play the game here for his friends,

And hide the lad lest they be forced to fight?

DIO. That well might be. And if the king would
 hide him, 130

Thy hope would hit upon him thus at hazard?

UL. Call me not fool. Attend and hear my plot:
Nor marvel, Diomede, to learn that he,
Whom the high gods name champion of the Greeks,
Lurks in the habit of a girl disguised
Amid the maidens of this island court.

DIO. That were too strange. How guess you that?

UL. My spies,
Who have searched the isle, say there 's no youth
 thereon,
Having Achilles' age of sixteen years,
But is well known of native parentage. 140
Now Thetis' son must be of wondrous beauty,
That could not scape inquiry; we therefore look
For what is hid, and not to be disguised
Save as I guess.

DIO. If this be so, thy purpose
Is darker still.

UL. I lead thee by the steps
I came myself to take, slowly and surely . . .
And next this, that 'twere dull to ask the king
To help to find the thing he goes to hide:
Therefore the search must be without his knowledge.
'Twas thus I sent up Abas to the court, 150
Idly to engage him in preliminaries,
The while I work; my only hope being this,
To come myself to parley with the maidens;
Which to procure I brought with me aboard
A pedlar's gear, and with such gawds and trinkets

As tickle girlish fancies, I shall steal
Upon them at their play; my hoary beard
And rags will set them at their ease; and while
They come about me, and turn o'er my pack,
I spy. If then Achilles be among them, 160
The lad's indifference soon will mark him out;
When, watching my occasion, I'll exhibit
Something that should provoke his eye and tongue.
If he betray himself, thou being at hand

DIO. Why, 'tis a dirty trick.

UL. Not if it wins.

DIO. Fie! fie!

In rags and a white beard?

UL. No better way.

DIO. The better way were not to lose the hour
Hearkening to oracles, while our good ships
Rot, and our men grow stale. Why, you may see 170
Imperial Agamemnon in the eyes
Of all his armament walk daily forth
To take fresh note of sparrows and of snakes:
And if he spy an eagle, 'twill make talk
For twenty days. Would you have oracles,
Give me the whipping of the priests. Zeus help me!
If half the chiefs knew but their minds as I,
There'd be no parleying. I'll to war alone
And with my eighty ships do what I may
'Gainst gods and men. Ay, and the greater odds 180
The better fighting.

UL. Now 'tis thou that talkest.

DIO. Tell me then why we are prowling on this
hill.

UL Excellent reasons. First that when I come

I may know how to come, and where to hide
 From them I would not meet: and thereto this,
 That if Achilles fly, he should not take us
 At too great disadvantage: thou mayst head him,
 Knowing the ground about, while I pursue.
 He must not scape. But hark, 'tis time the plot
 Were put to proof; already it must be noon; 190
 And I hear steps and voices. Let us return
 To the ship. If they that come be those we seek, . . .
 Hark, and 'tis they,—we can look back upon them.
 I 'll be amongst them soon.

DIO.

'Tis a girls' game.

[*Exeunt into the bushes.*]

Enter DEIDAMIA, ACHILLES as Pyrrha, with the CHORUS of maidens.

DEIDAMIA (without).

Follow me, follow. I lead the race. [Enters.]

CHOR. Follow, we follow, we give thee chase.

[Entering.]

DEID. Follow me, follow.

CH. We come, we come.

DEID. Here is my home;
 I choose this tree: this is the ground 200
 Where we will make our play. Stand all around
 And let us beg the dwellers in this glade
 To bear us company. Be not afraid,
 (I will begin) sweet birds, whose flowery songs
 Sprinkle with joy the budding boughs above,
 The airy city where your light folk throngs,
 Each with his special exquisite of love,—

Red-throat and white-throat, finch and golden-crest,
 Deep-murmuring pigeon, and soft-cooing dove,—
 Unto his mate addrest, that close in nest 210
 Sits on the dun and dappled eggs all day.
 Come red-throat, white-throat, finch and golden-crest,
 Let not our merry play drive you away.

CH. And ye brown squirrels, up the rugged bark
 That fly, and leap from bending spray to spray,
 And bite the luscious shoots, if I should mark,
 Slip not behind the trunks, nor hide away.—
 Ye earthy moles, that burrowing in the dark
 Your glossy velvet coats so much abuse;—
 Ye watchful dormice, and small skipping shrews, 220
 Stay not from foraging; dive not from sight.—
 Come moles and mice, squirrels and skipping shrews,
 Come all, come forth, and join in our delight.

DEID. Enough. Now while the Dryads of the hill
 Interpret to the creatures our good will,
 Listen, and I will tell you a new game
 That we can play together.—As hither I came,
 I marked that in the hazel copse below,
 Where we so oft have hidden and loved to go
 To hear the night-bird, or to take unseen 230
 Our noontide walks beneath the tangled screen,
 The woodcutter hath been with cruel blade,
 And of the tasselled plumes his strewage made:
 And now beside the mossy snags close shorn
 The covert lies in swathe like autumn corn.
 These ere he lop and into bundles bind,
 Let us go choose the fairest we may find,
 And of their feathered orphan saplings weave
 A bowery dome, until the birds believe

We build a nest, and are come here to dwell. 240
 Hie forth, ye Scyrian maids; do as I tell:
 And having built our bower amid the green,
 We will choose one among us for a queen,
 And be the Amazons, whose maiden clan
 By broad Thermodon dwells, apart from man;
 Who rule themselves, from his dominion free,
 And do all things he doth, better than he.
 First, Amazons, your queen: to choose her now:
 Who shall she be?

CH. Thyself, thou. Who but thou?
 Deidamia.

DEID. Where then were the play, 250
 If I should still command, and ye obey?

CH. Choose thou for all.
DEID. Nor will I name her, lest
 Ye say my favour sets one o'er the rest.

CH. Thy choice is ours.
DEID. If then I gave my voice
 For Pyrrha?

CH. Pyrrha, Pyrrha is our choice.
 Hail, Pyrrha, hail! Queen of the Amazons!
DEID. (*To Ach.*) To thee I abdicate my place,
 and give
 My wreath for crown. Long, my queen, mayst thou
 live!
 Now, fellow-subjects, hie we off at once.

ACHILLES.

Stay, stay! Is this the privilege of the throne? 260
 Am I preferred but to be left alone?
 No guard, no counsellor, no company!
 Deidamia, stay!

DEID. Thy word must be
My law, O queen: I will abide. But ye
Forth quickly, as I said; ye know the place.

CH. Follow me, follow: I lead the race.

Follow, we follow, we give thee chase.

Follow me, follow.

We come, we come. [Exeunt CHOR.]

ACH. I could not bear that thou shouldst strain
thy hands 270

Dragging those branches up the sunny hill;
Nor for a thousand honours thou shouldst do me,
Making me here thy queen, would I consent
To lose thy company, even for an hour.
See, while the maids warm in their busy play,
We may enjoy in quiet the sweet air,
And thro' the quivering golden green look up
To the deep sky, and have high thoughts as idle
And bright, as are the small white clouds becalmed
In disappointed voyage to the noon: 280
There is no better pastime.

DEID. I will sit with thee
In idleness, while idleness can please.

ACH. It is not idleness to steep the soul
In nature's beauty: rather every day
We are idle letting beauteous things go by
Unheld, or scarce perceived. We cannot dream
Too deeply, nor o'erprize the mood of love,
When it comes on us strongly, and the hour
Is ripe for thought.

DEID. I have a thought, a dream;
If thou canst keep it secret.

ACH. I am thy slave. 299

DEID. Suppose—'tis more than that, yet I'll but say
 Suppose—we played this game of Amazons
 In earnest. What an isle this Scyros were;
 Rich and well-planted, and its rocky coast
 Easy of defence: the women now upon it
 Could hold it. Nay, I have often thought it out:
 The king my sire is threescore years and more,
 And hath no heir: suppose that when he dies,—
 The gods defer it long, but when he dies,
 If thou and I should plan to seize this isle, 300
 Drive out the men, and rule it for our own . . .
 Wouldst thou work with me, Pyrrha, the thing could be.
 Why shouldst thou smile? I do not say that I
 Would rate my strength with men; but on the farms
 Women are thicker sinewed; and in thee
 I see what all might be. I am sure for speed
 No man could match thee, and thou hast an arm
 To tug an oar or hurl the heaviest spear,
 Or wrestle with the best. Why dost thou smile?

ACH. When thou art queen, I'll be thy general.

DEID. That was my thought. What dost thou
 think?

ACH. I think
 That Fate hath marked me for a general. 312

DEID. Nay, but I jest not.

ACH. Then shall I forecast
 And weigh impediments against thee? as men
 Will in like case, who think no scheme mature
 Till counsel hath forestalled all obstacles.

DEID. If thou canst think of any.

ACH. First is this,
 Whence shall we get our subjects when our isle

Is peopled but by women?

DEID. Fairly asked,
Had I not thought of it. We shall import them 320
From other isles. Girl children everywhere
Are held of small account: these we will buy,
Bartering for them our fruits and tapestries,
And chiefly from the country whence thou comest;
For there I think the women must be taller
And stronger than with us.

ACH. And who will act
Persuader to the maidens of the isle
To banish all their lovers?

DEID. O Pyrrha, shame!
Man's love is nothing; what knowst thou of it
To magnify its folly? 'Tis a mischief 330
To thwart our good: therefore I banish it.
A woman's love may be as much to woman
As a man's love can be. 'Tis reasonable
This, and no dream. 'Tis my experience.
When I am with thee, Pyrrha, I want nothing.
No woman sitting by her silly lover
Could take such pleasure from his flatteries
As I from thy speech. When thou lookest on me
I am all joy; and if 'tis so with thee,
Why need we argue? Tell me, when I am with thee
Dost thou lack aught, or wish I were a man? 341

ACH. In truth nay, but . .

DEID. A wretched but: I know
What that would say; this thing cannot be done
Because 'twas never done. But that's with me
The reason why it should be done.

ACH. I see.

Yet novelty hath no wear. Remember too
 We must grow old. The spirit of such adventure
 Tires as the body ages.

DEID. For that I think
 I make the best provision. Nay, I have seen
 Full many an old dame left in last neglect, 350
 Whose keen gray eye, peaked face, and silver hair
 Were god-like set beneath a helm of brass.

ACH. Here be the maids: ask them their mind
 at once.

DEID. Nay, for the world no word.

Enter CHORUS, with flowers.

Why run they breathlessly in merry fear?
 What have ye seen? What now?

CH. The king. Fly, fly!

ACH. Why should we fly the king?

CH. A man is with him, and they come this way.

DEID. Who is it?

CH. Nay, we know not.

DEID. What hath happed?

CH. We went forth as ye bade, and all together
 Ran down the hill, the straightest way we might,
 Into the copse, and lo! 'twas as thou saidst; 362
 The hazels are all felled, but on the ground,
 That 'neath the straight trunks of the airy trees
 Lies in the spotted sunlight, are upsprung
 Countless anemones, white, red, and blue,
 In the bright glade. Forgetting why we came,
 We fell to gathering these. I chose the blue,
 As ye may see, loving blue blossoms best,
 That are content with heaven.

2nd Speaker. And I the red, 370
 Love's passionate colour; and the love in these
 Is mixed with heavenly to a royal purple.

3rd. And I the white: whose praise I will not tell,
 Lest it should blush.

4th. And I have mixed together
 The red and white.

5th. And I the red and blue.

6th. And I the blue and white.

DEID. Well, but the matter.
 What happened next, tell me?

CH. (1st.) Still at this game,
 Like to a hungry herd that stops and feeds,
 Snatching what tempts it on, we made advance
 To the entrance of the combe; and then one cried,
 Look up! Look there! And from the open brow,
 Whence we looked down upon the sea, we saw 382
 A great war-ship in the harbour: and one said,
 She comes from Athens; and another, nay,
 Her build is Rhodian: when as there we gazed,
 Counting her ports, and wondering of her name,—
 We heard men's voices and beheld the king
 Mounting the hill-side, with a stranger clad
 In short Greek robes. Then ran we back to thee,
 Ere we were seen, in haste; that we may hide, 390
 And not be called within to attend the guests.

DEID. So did ye well, whoe'er it be, and best
 If 'tis the prince of Melos, as I fear:
 Who late my father said would come to woo me:
 But he must find me first. [Going.

ACH. I'll be thine eyes
 And take his measure. Let me lurk behind,

I'll learn his height, the colour of his beard,
And bring thee word.

DEID. I pray, no beards for me.
Those that love beards remain. The rest with me.
Follow me, follow: I lead the race. [Exit.
CH. Follow, we follow. We give thee chase—
Follow me, follow—
—We come, we come. [Exeunt CHOR. 402

ACH. I wish I had had Apollo for my sire;
Or that old Cheiron, when he taught me arms,
Hunting the beasts on bushy Pelion,
Had led and trained me rather, as well he knew,
In that fair park of fancy and delight,
Where but the Graces and the Muses come.
For he could sing: and oft took down at eve 410
From the high pillar of his rocky cave
The lyre or pipe, and whiled the darksome hours.
Which would I had learned, to touch the stops and
strings,
Nor only harked thereto: for nought he sang,
Whether of gods or men, of peace or war,
Had any theme of sweetness to compare
With my new world, here, where I am king, and
rule
The sweetest thing in nature. Had I skill
To give translation to my joy, I think
I could make music that should charm the world.
O Deidamia, thou Queen of my heart, 421
I would enchant thee and thine isle. Alas!
How wilt thou learn thou art mine? How can I tell
And with the word not lose thee? Now this suitor

Threats my betrayal . . . He comes. I'll watch. Yet
not

With jealous eyes, but heedful of my fate.

[*Hides in bushes.*]

Enter LYCOMEDES and ABAS.

LYCOMEDES.

'Tis folly and impertinence. I say it
With due respect unto the prince, thy master,
Who am as much his elder as the king
His father is. He ne'er would so have wronged me,—
The mild and good Laertes.—In this isle 431
Think'st thou 'twere possible a man should hide,
And I not know it?

ABAS. My Lord Ulysses, sire,
Bade me assure your majesty he came
More with the purpose to acquit your honour,—
Which suffers greatly in the common tongue,—
Than with a hope to find what he pretends
He comes to seek.

LYC. Why should he come at all?

AB. Taking your invitation in the sense
That I have spoken . . .

LYC. Thinks he, if I chose 440
To hide the man in Scyros, that a stranger
From Ithaca could find him?

AB. Nay . . .

LYC. It follows
Your search can never quit my honesty,
Where I am held accomplice; but no less
Must put a slight upon my wits, implying
Me the deceived.

AB. Your invitation, sire,
Covers that charge.

LYC. My invitation, sir,
Was but my seal of full denial, a challenge
For honour's eye, not to be taken up.
Your master hath slipped in manners: yet fear not
But I will meet and treat him as his birth 451
And name require. Speak we no more of this.
What think'st thou of our isle?

AB. The famed Ægean
Hath not a finer jewel on her breast.

LYC. Come, come! you overpraise us: there's no
need.
We Scyrians are contented.—Now we are climbed
Above the town to the east; and you may see
The western seaboard, and our other port.
The island narrows here to twenty stades,
Cut like a wasp; the shoulder where we stand 460
Is its best natured spot: It falls to the sun,
And at this time of the year takes not too much.

AB. 'Tis strange how in all points the lie of the land
Is like our Ithaca, but better clothed.

LYC. And larger, is't not?

AB. Past comparison.—

LYC. What navy bring ye to the war?

AB. Ah, sire!
We have no ships to boast of—with our own
Zakynthus, Cephallenia, and the rest,
Joining their numbers, raise but ten or twelve. 469

LYC. And these your prince commands?

AB. Such as they be.

LYC. Tidings come slowly to us here. I pray you

Tell me the latest of your preparations.
 The thing must drag: there was some talk awhile
 Of coldness 'twixt the chiefs: 'twould be no wonder.
 They that combine upon one private grudge
 May split upon another.

AB. Still their zeal
 Increases: 'tis as fire spread from a spark.

LYC. A spark? well—Menelaus. At this time
 What numbers hath he drawn, and whence?

AB. The ships
 Number above a thousand: a tenth of these 480
 Are sent by Corinth, Sicyon and Mycenæ;
 Sixty are Spartan, and king Agamemnon
 Provides as many as these all told together.
 Then from Ægina, Epidaurus, Argos,
 And Tiryns Diomede brings eighty: Nestor
 Ninety from Pylos; from Bœotia
 Come eighty; Phocis and Phthiotis each
 Send forty; Athens fifty; and Eubœa
 Forty; from Salamis Ajax brings twelve;
 Oilean Ajax with the Locrians 490
 Forty more; from our neighbours in the west,
 Dulichium and Ætolia eighty sail;
 Again as many from hundred-citied Crete
 Under the king Idomeneus, and nine
 From Rhodes: All these, with others that escape
 My hasty summing, lie drawn up at Aulis.
 'Tis such a sight as, I am bold to say,
 If but your majesty could see it, would move you
 To make a part of the splendour.

LYC. Nay, I have seen them.

AB. Your majesty hath been at Aulis?

LYC.

Nay,

500

Nor yet at Aulis: but the tale thou tellest
 Coming unto my ears a month ago,
 Some of my lords and I one idle morn
 Crossed to Eubœa,—'tis a pleasure trip,
 On a clear day scarce out of sight of home—
 We landed 'neath Æchalia by noon,
 And, crossing o'er the isle on mules, were lodged
 That night at Chalcis. The next day at dawn
 I played the spy. 'Twas such a breathless morning
 When all the sound and motion of the sea 510
 Is short and sullen, like a dreaming beast:
 Or as 'twere mixed of heavier elements
 Than the bright water, that obeys the wind.
 Hiring a fishing boat we bade the sailors
 Row us to Aulis: when midway the straits,
 The morning mist lifted, and lo, a sight
 Unpicturable.—High upon our left
 Where we supposed was nothing, suddenly
 A tall and shadowy figure loomed: then two,
 And three, and four, and more towering above us:
 But whether poised upon the leaden sea 521
 They stood, or floated in the misty air,
 That baffling our best vision held entangled
 The silver of the half-awakened sun,
 Or whether near or far, we could not tell,
 Nor what: at first I thought them rocks, but ere
 That error could be told, they were upon us
 Bearing down swiftly athwart our course; and all
 Saw 'twas a fleet of ships, not three or four
 Now, but unnumber'd: like a floating city, 530
 If such could be, with walls and battlements

Spread on the wondering water: and now the sun
Broke thro' the haze, and from the shields outhung
Blazed back his dazzling beams, and round their prows
On the divided water played; as still
They rode the tide in silence, all their oars
Stretched out aloft, as are the balanced wings
Of storm-fowl, which returned from battling flight
Across the sea, steady their aching plumes
And skim along the shuddering cliffs at ease: 540
So came they gliding on the sullen plain,
Out of the dark, in silent state, by force
Yet unexpended of their nightlong speed.

Those were the Cretan ships, who when they saw us
Hailed for a pilot, and of our native sailors
Took one aboard, and dipping all their oars
Passed on, and we with them, into the bay.

Then from all round; where the dark hulls were
moored
Against the shore, and from the tents above
A shout of joy went up, re-echoing 550
From point to point; and we too cheered and caught
The zeal of that great gathering.—Where man is met
The gods will come; or shall I say man's spirit
Hath operative faculties to mix
And make his gods at will? Howe'er that be,
Soon a swift galley shot out from the rest
To meet the comers. That was Agamemnon's,
They told me; and I doubt not he was in it,
And gave his welcome to Idomeneus,
And took him to his tent. On such a day 560
Our little boat rowed where we would unmarked:
We were but Chalcian pilots. So I saw

Whate'er I wished to see, and came away
 Across the strait that night, and the next day
 Was home by sundown.

AB. All this could you see
 Without the wish to join?

LYC. I say not that;
 For wish I did that I was young again.
 Then, sir, I would have left whate'er I had,
 My kingdom to another, for the pride,
 Of high place in such war; now I am old. 570

AB. But older men than thou have joined us, sire.
 War needs experience.

LYC. Concerning war
 I am divided in opinion, Abas:
 But lean to think it hath a wholesome root
 Supportive to our earthly habit. I see
 The noblest beasts will love to fight, and man
 Is body as well as spirit: his mind that's set
 In judgment o'er those twain must oft admit
 The grosser part hath a preponderant claim.
 But I regret this, and my discontent 580
 Puts me this question, Shall man never come
 To a better state with his desire? What think you?
 What if our race yet young should with the time
 Throw off the baser passions, as I find
 Myself by age affected? I know not . . .
 I have a little statue in my house,
 Which, if you look on't long, begets belief
 Of absolute perfectionment; the artist
 Should have been present when man's clay was mixed.
 Prometheus, or whoever 'twas that made us, 590
 Had his head turned with natural history:

All excellent contrivance, but betraying
 Commonness and complexity. Well! well!
 No need of my philosophies in Scyros—
 War must have motive, and the men I rule
 Are simple and contented with their lot.
 None in my land would wish an atom changed:
 Were even Achilles here 'twould be no wonder
 If he had caught our temper.

AB.

All men witness

To thy good rule, O king: but in the wars 600
 Fame may be won.

Lyc.

Nor do I ask for fame.

Come that to whom it will; to Agamemnon,
 To Ajax or Ulysses or Achilles.

AB. To Achilles no: 'tis not in the gods' grace
 To succour pigritude. To him, a lad,
 The prize of honour above all the Greeks
 Was offered: by the poor effeminacy
 With which he hath rejected it, he is judged
 Meanest of all. But since we cannot win
 Without him, we must have him. Little glory 610
 To him, except to be Fate's dullest tool.

Lyc. Maybe. Now come we on. I had thought
 to find

My daughter and her train. I'll take thee round
 Another way to the palace: thither no doubt
 She is now returned. [Exeunt.

Enter ACHILLES from the bushes.

ACH. Villain, I thank the gods that sent thee hither.
 But thou wast near thy death. Walk off secure,
 Not knowing that I heard. *Effeminate*

The meanest of the Greeks! were he the best,
 I'd slay him in this garment. Yet he is but 620
 A tongue to troll opinion of me, a slave,
 Fetcher and carrier of others' tales, and doth
 The drudgery honestly; for that I'll thank him
 And profit by his slander. Ay, so I'll do—
 Now in good time—I'll get me a man's dress
 And meet them here, ere they suspect me:—or, stay!
 I can outwit them better. I'll take a boat,
 Cross o'er to Aulis, like good Lycomede,
 This very night, and there to Agamemnon
 Declare myself; and men shall never know 630
 How I was hid, nor whence I came.

Enter THETIS.

TH.

My son!

ACH. My goddess mother, welcome! yet I am
 shamed

That thou shouldst find me thus.

TH.

How art thou shamed?

ACH. This dress. O thou canst help me: thou
 art ready

At every need. And here hath been a man
 Who, thinking not I heard, spake to the king
 Of thy Achilles with such scorn, that I
 Should have leaped forth upon him in my rage,
 And strangled him, but that he seemed to be 639
 Another's servant.

TH.

Then thou hast seen them, son?

ACH. Who are they?

TH. Those I came to warn thee of;
 Ulysses and his friends. Knowst thou 'tis they

Are come unto the isle to seek thee?

ACH. Ay.

But thou art ready to outwit their wile.

As thou didst bring me hither on that night

When all thy nymphs, assembling 'neath the moon

Upon the Achæan shore, bore me away

Across the sea, even so to Aulis now

Convey me secretly, and set me there, 649

Ere men know whence I come.

TH. What hear I, son?

To Aulis? to thy foes?

ACH. A thousand ships

Moored idle in the bay wait but for me:

And round the shore the captains of the Greeks

Impatient in their tents but call for me.

Be they my foes to speak or wish me ill

'Tis only that I come not. I must go.

TH. There let them tarry till the sea-worm bore
Their ships to rottenness; or, sail they forth,
Let them be butchered by the sword of Hector,
Ere thou be snared to serve their empty pride. 660

ACH. But louder than their need my honour calls:
Hast thou no thought of this in all thy love?

TH. Who then is honoured more or more desired
Than thou art now? but they, if once they had thee,
Would slight thee, and pretend they were the men.

ACH. But those are honoured best that hear their
praise.

TH. Is not high Zeus himself, holding aloof,
Worshipped the more? Let the world say of thee,
When these have perished, that they went their way
Because the son of Thetis would not aid them. 670

ACH. But if 'twere said because he feared to die?

TH. Fearst thou reproach of fear that fearst not death?

ACH. I fear not, but by proof would shun reproach.

TH. Men, son, are what they are; and thou art brave.

'Tis asked of poor and questionable spirits

To prove their worth.

ACH. I prove myself a coward.

TH. How! when it needed heavenly prayers and tears,

The force of duty and a goddess' will

To keep thee back from death! when all the joys

That I have set about thee, and a love 680

More beautiful than Helen's cannot hold thee!

ACH. Fate, that from men hideth her pitiless face,

Offered to me this kindness, that my will

Should be of force in predetermined deeds:

Allowing me to take which life I would

Of two incomparable lots; I ever

Leaned one way, the other thou; and still at heart

I hold to my first choice.

TH. O child of man,

Though child of mine, wouldst thou know wisdom's way,

Learn it of me. If I had said to thee 690

Thou being a mortal shouldst love death and darkness;

For in the brief date of thy heedless term

'Tis vain to strive with evil: and since the end

Cometh the same, and at the latest cometh

So soon, that there's no difference to be told

'Twixt early and late, 'tis wisdom to despair:

Then would thy tongue have boldly answered me,

And said, Man hath his life, that it must end

Condemns it not for naught. Are rivers salt
 Because they travel to the bitter sea? 700

Is the day dark because the gorgeous west
 Must fade in gloom, when the ungazeable sun
 Is fallen beneath the waves? Or hath the spring
 No charm in her paviiions, are her floors
 Not starred, for that we see her birth is slow
 Of niggard winter, and her blossoms smirched
 By summer's tyranny? Hadst thou said this,
 And that Earth's changeful pride, the life of man,
 Is exquisite in such a quality
 To make the high gods envious could they guess:
 Then had I found no answer: but when I 711
 Told thee of joy, and set thee in the midst,
 That thou shouldst argue with me that 'tis best
 To die at once, and for an empty name
 Pass to the trivial shades; then must I fear
 I have a foolish and a thankless son,
 As disobedient.—Yet when first I taught thee
 Thou gav'st me promise to be wise.

ACH. But never
 Wilt thou then free me from my promise given?

TH. Not to thy hurt.

ACH. See now what shame I bear!
TH. Why make so much of shame? If thou despise
 The pleasure of the earth, why not the shame? 722

ACH. I wrong, too, this old king.

TH. His daughter more,
 If thou desert her.

ACH. But 'twould hurt her less
 To lose me now than know me when disgraced.

TH. I plead not in her name, nor charge thee, son,

With loving her in my contempt. A dream
 Of mortal fancy or honour may becloud
 Thy mind awhile, but ne'er canst thou forget
 Thy bond to me; the care that never left thee 730
 Till thou wert out of hand; the love that dared
 To send thee from my sight when thou wast able,
 And to strange lands; my secret visitings
 There, and revisitings; the dreams I sent thee,
 Warnings of ill, and ecstasies of pride;
 The thousand miracles I wrought to save thee,
 And guard thee to thy prime; and now men say
 Thou art the first of the Greeks: their homaged kings
 The gods condemn to death if thou withhold
 Thy single arm. Why so? What hast thou done?
 Where have men seen thee? Hast thou ruled like
 Nestor? 741

Conquered like Agamemnon, fought like Ajax?
 What is thy prowess, what thy skill but this,
 That thou art son of Thetis? Disobey not,
 Nor question now my bidding. Must I kneel,
 Embrace thy knees, or melt before thy face
 In supplicating tears? O if thy birth
 Did cost the tenderest tears that god e'er shed,
 Make not those bitter drops to have flowed in vain.
 Whate'er fate portion thee my joy is this— 750
 That thou dost love me. Dost thou cease to love,
 I am most miserable.

ACH. O fear not that,
 Mother and goddess! Pardon me, weep not.
 Let all men curse me, be my name abhorred,
 Rather than thou be grieved. 'Twas anger moved me
 I will forget this, and obey thee. Say

What I must do, how best avoid these men :
And how refuse their call if I be found.

TH. Kiss me, my son. By the gods' life, I love thee :
My grief is to deny thee. But there's need 760
Of counsel, for the day is critical
And glides apace. And first if they should find thee,
Then 'tis thy fate to go : I cannot stay thee.
And since to bear thee hence were sure betrayal,
I urge thee to be true to thy disguise.
And better to escape thy foes, learn now
Whom most to dread. Of all the Argives shun
Ulysses ; come not near him in the halls ;
And should he speak to thee, answer no word.
Him thou wilt know by his preëminence : 770
As for his person, he is beardless yet,
As smooth of face as tongue, gentle in voice
But sturdy of body, and 'neath his helm his locks
O'er a wide brow and restless eye curl forth
In ruddy brown ; nor less for his attire
Notable is he, wearing the best of all,
His linen broidered, and broad jewels to hold
A robe of gray and purple.

ACH. He shall not spy me.
But if by any warning from the gods
He know and call to me, how then to escape 780
The shame of this Ionian skirt ?

TH. That chance
I can provide for, and shall give thee now
A magic garment fitting to thy body,
Which worn beneath thy robe will seem as west
Of linen thread, but if it meet the light
'Twill be a gilded armour, and serve well

In proof as show. Come, I will set it on thee.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter DEIDAMIA and CHORUS.

DEID. The ground is clear, we have deceived them mightily,

Running around.

CH. Where is our queen?

(2) Not here.

DEID. I'll call her. Pyrrha!—Call all together.

CH. Pyrrha!

DEID. She will come presently.—Did ye not mark How resonant this glade is? that our voices 792 Neither return nor fly, but stay about us? It is the trunks of the trees that cage the sound; As in an open temple, where the pillars Enrich the music. In my father's hall The echo of each note burdens the next. 'Twould be well done to cut a theatre Deep in some wooded dale. Till Pyrrha come, Alexia, sing thou here.

CH. What shall I sing? 800

DEID. There is a Lydian chant I call to mind In honour of music-makers: it beginneth With praise of the soft spring, and heavenly love— 'Twill suit our mood, if thou remember it.

CHORUS.

The earth loveth the spring,
Nor of her coming despaireth,
Withheld by nightly sting,
Snow, and icy fling,
The snarl of the North:

But nevertheless she prepareth 810
 And setteth in order her nurselings to bring them forth,
 The jewels of her delight,
 What shall be blue, what yellow or white,
 What softest above the rest,
 The primrose, that loveth best
 Woodland skirts and the copses shorn.

2.

And on the day of relenting she suddenly weareth
 Her budding crowns. O then, in the early morn,
 Is any song that compareth
 With the gaiety of birds, that thrill the gladdened air
 In inexhaustible chorus 821
 To awake the sons of the soil
 With music more than in brilliant halls sonorous
 (—It cannot compare—)
 Is fed to the ears of kings
 From the reeds and hirèd strings.
 For love maketh them glad;
 And if a soul be sad,
 Or a heart oracle dumb,
 Here may it taste the promise of joy to come. 830

3.

For the Earth knoweth the love which made her,
 The omnipotent one desire,
 Which burns at her heart like fire,
 And hath in gladness arrayed her.
 And man with the Maker shareth,
 Him also to rival throughout the lands,
 To make a work with his hands
 And have his children adore it:

The Creator smileth on him who is wise and dareth
 In understanding with pride : 840
 For God, where'er he hath builded, dwelleth wide,—
 And he careth,—
 To set a task to the smallest atom,
 The law-abiding grains,
 That hearken each and rejoice :
 For he guideth the world as a horse with reins ;
 It obeyeth his voice,
 And lo ! he hath set a beautiful end before it.

4.

Whereto it leapeth and striveth continually,
 And pitith nought, nor spareth : 850
 The mother's wail for her children slain,
 The stain of disease,
 The darts of pain,
 The waste of the fruits of trees,
 The slaughter of cattle,
 Unbrotherly lust, the war
 Of hunger, blood, and the yells of battle,
 It heedeth no more
 Than a carver regardeth the wood that he cutteth away :
 The grainèd shavings fall at his feet, 860
 But that which his tool hath spared shall stand
 For men to praise the work of his hand ;
 For he cutteth so far, and there it lay,
 And his work is complete.

5

But I will praise 'mong men the masters of mind
 In music and song,
 Who follow the love of God to bless their kind :

And I pray they find
 A marriage of mirth—
 And a life long
 With the gaiety of the Earth. 870

CH. There stands an old man down beneath the bank,
 Gazing, and beckoning to us.

DEID. He is a stranger,
 That burdened with some package to the palace
 Hath missed his way about, and fears to intrude.
 Go some and show him. [Some run out.]

Meanwhile what do we?
 We have no sport when Pyrrha is away.
 Our game is broken. Come, a thought, a thought!
 Hath none a thought?

CH. We have never built the bower.

DEID. Ye idled gathering flowers. Now 'tis too
 late. 880

CH. Let us play ball.

DEID. The sun is still so high.
 I shall go feed my doves.

(*Re-enter one of Chorus.*)

CH. The old man saith
 That he is a pedlar, and hath wares to sell
 If he may show them. Shall he come?

DEID. Now Hermes,
 The father of device and jugglery,
 Be thanked for this; 'tis he hath sent him.—Call him.
 His tales may be good hearing, tho' his pack
 Repay not search. But be advised: beware,
 Lest he bear off more than he bring: these fellows

Have fingers to unclasp a brooch or pin 890
 While the eye winks that watches. There was one
 Who as he ran a race would steal the shoes
 Of any that ran with him. The prince of all
 Was merry Autolycus.

*Enter, with those who had gone out, ULYSSES
 as a pedlar.*

Good day, old man.

Come, let us see thy wares.

UL. I have no breath left,
 Wherewith to thank you, ladies: the little hill
 Has ta'en it from me.

DEID. Rest awhile, and tell us
 Whence thou art come.

UL. In a Greek ship this morn.
 I pray you, that I lack not courtesy,
 Art thou the princess of this isle?

DEID. I am. 900

UL. My true and humble service to your highness.

DEID. In turn say who art thou, and whence
 thy ship.

UL. Fair, honoured daughter of a famous king,
 I have no story worthy of thine ear,
 Being but a poor artificer of Smyrna,
 Where many years I wrought, as ye shall see,
 Not without skill, in silver and in gold.
 But happiness hath wrecked me, and I say
 'Tis ill to marry young; for from that joy
 I gat a son, who as the time went on, 910
 Grew to be old and gray and wise as I;
 And bettering much the art which I had taught him,

Longed to be master in my place, for which
 He grew unkind, and his sons hated me:
 And when one day he wished me dead, I feared
 Lest I should kill myself; and so that night
 I made me up a pack of little things
 He should not grieve for, and took ship for Greece.
 There have I trafficked, lady, a year and more,
 And kept myself alive hawking small ware 920
 From place to place, and on occasion found
 A market for my jewels, and be come here
 Making the round of the isles in any ship
 That chances: and this last I came aboard
 At Andros, where I was: but whence she hailed
 I have even forgot. May it please thee see my
 wares?

DEID. Thy tale is very sad. I am sorry for thee.
 Why would thy son, being as thou sayst so skilled,
 Not ply his trade apart?

UL. My house in Smyrna
 Was head of all the goldsmiths: 'twas for that, 930
 Lady, he envied me. See now my wares.

DEID. What beauteous work! I'm glad thou'rt
 come. I'll buy
 A trinket for myself, and let my maids
 Choose each what she may fancy. Hear ye, girls?
 I'll make a gift to each.

CH. O thanks.—To all?—
 And may we choose?

DEID. Yes.

CH. Anything we please?

DEID. Why, that is choosing.

CH. O we thank thee.

UL.

Now

I see, princess, thou'rt of a bounteous blood,
To make all round thee happy.

DEID.

What is this brooch?

UL. If for thyself thou fancy a brooch, I'll show
thee

940

The best jewel in my box, and not be shamed
To say I have no better.

CH.

See, oh, see!

What lovely things!—A rare old man!

UL.

Here 'tis.

What thinkest thou?

DEID.

Is 't not a ruby?

UL.

And fine!

DEID. I think thy son will have missed this.*UL.*

Nay, lady:

I had it of a sailor, who, poor fool,
Knew not its worth; and thou mayst buy it of me
For half its value.

DEID. May I take these two
To view them nearly?

UL. All take as ye will.
Ye do me honour, ladies.

DEID. Hear ye, girls, 950
Make each her choice. I will o'erlook your taste
When all is done.

UL. Come, buy my wares: come buy.
Come, come buy; I've wares for all,
Were ye each and all princesses.
Clasps and brooches, large and small,
Handy for holding your flowing dresses.

CH. What is this little box for?

UL. Open it.

CH. What is this vial?

UL. Smell it. Buy, come buy!

Charms for lovers, charms to break,
Charms to bind them to you wholly. 960
Medicines fit for every ache,
Fever and fanciful melancholy.

CH. O smell this scent.—Here be fine pins.—See this!

UL. (aside). I spy none here to match my notion yet.

CH. I have found amber beads.—What is it is tied
In little packets?

UL. Toilet secrets those,
Perfumes, and rare cosmetics 'gainst decay.

DEID. (to one apart). Alexia, see. I will buy this
for Pyrrha.

'Tis pity she is not here. What thinkest thou of it?
He said it was his best. This other one 970
I'll give to thee if thou find nothing better.

Go see. I will seek Pyrrha. [Exit R.

UL. Buy, come buy!

Tassels, fringes, silken strings,
Girdles, ties, and Asian pockets,
Armlets, necklaces and rings,
Images, amulets, lovers' lockets.

CH. Pray, what are these, good man?

UL. Of soft doe-skin

These gilded thongs are made for dancers' wear,
To tie their sandals.

CH. And is this a pin,
This golden grasshopper?

UL. Ay, for the hair. 980

The Athenian ladies use nought else. See here
This little cup.

CH. Didst thou make that?

UL. Nay, ladies.

CH. Show us some work of thine which thou
didst make

Thy very self.

UL. See then this silver snake.

Fear not. Come near and mark him well: my trade is,
Or was, I should say, in such nice devices.

It coils and curls, uncoils, darts and recoils. [Showing.

*The Chorus crowd about him, when enter unperceived
by him ACHILLES and DEIDAMIA.*

DEID. Come, come, there never hath been one
like him.

Hark! see the girls: they crowd and chatter round
As greedily as birds being fed. I bade them choose
Each one a present, but I took the best, 991
This ruby brooch. Look at it: 'tis for thee.

Let me now put it on thee. I'll unclasp
Thy robe and set it in the place of the other.

ACH. Nay, Deidamia, unfasten not my robe!

DEID. Why, 'twould not matter if he looked this
way.

ACH. Nay, prithee,—

DEID. Well, thou must take my gift.

ACH. Then must I give thee somewhat in return.

DEID. But 'tis my will to-day to give to all.

ACH. Then let me take my choice, some smaller
thing. 1000

DEID. Come then ere all is ransacked.

ACH. (aside). I scarce escaped
The uncovering of my magic coat.—[*They go to Ulysses.*

UL. Come buy,

Needles for your broideries rare,
Dainty bodkins silver-hasted.
Pins to fix your plaited hair,
Ivory-headed and golden-shafted.

ACH. What hast thou in thy pack for me, old man?

UL. There's nought but trifles left me, lady, now,
As dice and dolls; the very dregs of the box.

DEID. Athenian owls. And who's this red-baked
lady

1010

Clothed in a net?

UL. Princess, 'tis Britomartis,
The Cretan goddess worshipped at Ægina.

DEID. This little serpent too?

UL. Nothing to thee:
But the Erechtheidæ use to fasten such
About their children's necks. Nay, not a babe
Is born but they must don him one of these,
Or ever he be swaddled or have suck.

DEID. This blinking pygmy here, with a man's
body

And a dog's head, squatting upon a button . .
What's he?

UL. 'Tis an Egyptian charm, to ban 1020
The evil spirits bred of Nilus' slime.

DEID. And this?

UL. That. See, 'tis a Medusa, lady,
Cut in an oyster-shell, with flaming snakes.

DEID. These are all nothings. Thou must have
the brooch.

See, now 'tis thine; thou hast it. (*Pins it upon Achilles' robe.*) (To *UL.*) What is its price? (To *ACH.*) Nay, be content.

UL. To thee I'll sell it, lady, For a tenfold weight of gold.

ACH. Oh! 'tis too much. Spend not such store on me. And for the ruby, 'Tis dark and small.

UL. The purple is its merit: Were it three times the size and half the tint, 1030 'Twere of slight cost.

ACH. So might I like it better. And that—what's that, which thou dost put aside? Is that a toy?

UL. Nay, lady; that is no toy. 'Tis a sharp sword. But I will show it thee For its strange quality: the which methinks Might pass for magic, were 't not that an Arian, Late come to Sardis, knows the art to make it. Tho' wrought of iron, look ye, 'tis blue as flint, And if I bend it, it springs back like a bow: 'Tis sharper too than flint; but the edge is straight, And will not chip. Nay, touch it not; have care!

ACH. Pray, let me see it, and take it in my hand.

[*Takes it and comes to front.*

UL. (aside). This should be he.

ACH. (aside). My arm writhes at the touch.

UL. There is a hunter, with his game, a lion, Inlaid upon it; and on the other side 1045 Two men that fight to death.

ACH. 'Tis light in the hand.

DEID. (to ACH.). Canst thou imagine any use for this?

ACH. (*to DEID.*). Not when thy father dies?

UL. Ladies, have care.

For if the sword should wound you, I were blamed.

ACH. Why, thinkest thou 'tis only bearded men
Can wield a sword? The queen of the Amazons
Could teach thee something maugre thy white hair.

UL. (*aside*). The game hath run into the snare;
He is mine.

ACH. See, Deidamia, here's my choice; buy this
If thou wilt give me something; thou dost like 1055
The ruby, if thou wilt let me give thee that,
Thou in return buy me this little sword.

DEID. Such presents are ill-omened, and 'tis said
Will shrewdly cut in twain the love they pledge.

ACH. But we may make a bond of this divider.

DEID. Wilt thou in earnest take it for thy choice?

ACH. If thou wert late in earnest, thou couldst do
No better than arm all thy girls with these.

The weapon wins the battle, and I think
With such advantage women might be feared.

(*To UL.*) Old man, I like thy blade; and I will
have it.

I see 'twould thrust well: tell me if 'tis mettle
To give a stroke. Suppose I were thy foe,
And standing o'er thee thus to cut thee down
Should choose to cleave thy pate. Would this sword
do it? 1070

UL. (*aside*). He knows me!

[*Pulling off his beard and head-dress and leaping up.*
Achilles!]

DEID. and *CH.* Help! help! treachery!
[*They fly R.*]

DIOMEDE comes out of bushes R. where he stands unseen by Achilles.

ACH. Beardless—and smooth of face as tongue:
In voice

Gentle, but sturdy of body: ruddy locks,
And restless eye . . . Ulysses!

UL. Thou hast it.

ACH. I knew that thou wert here, but looked to
meet thee

1075

Without disguises, as an honest man.

UL. Thou needest a mirror, lady, for thyself.

ACH. (suddenly casts off his long robe and appears in
shining armour, still holding the sword).

Behold! . . . Be thou my mirror!

UL. If I be not,
'Tis shame to thee, the cause of my disguise.

ACH. I own thee not. I knew thee for a prince,
But seeing thee so vilely disfigured . . .

UL. Stay! 1081
We both have used disguise: I call for judgment
Upon the motive. Mine I donned for valour,
And care for thy renown; thine was for fear.

ACH. Fear! By the gods: take up thy beard again,
And thy mock dotage shield thee.

UL. Nay, Achilles;
If I spake wrong I will recall the word.

ACH. Thou didst unutterably lie. Recall it.

UL. Wilt thou then sail to Aulis in my ship?

ACH. I can sail thither and not sail with thee.

UL. But wilt thou come?

ACH. I answer not to thee

Because thou questionest me: but since I know
What will be, and hear thee in ignorance
Slander fair names, I tell thee that Achilles
Will come to Aulis.

UL. Wherefore now so long 1095
Hast thou denied thyself to thy renown?

ACH. Thou saidst for fear; nor hast recalled the word.

UL. 'Twas first thy taunt which drew my mind
from me:

But, if it wrong thee, I recall the word.

ACH. I think thou hast judged me by thyself,
Ulysses. 1100

When thou wast summoned to the war,—who wert
Not free to choose as I, but bound by oath
To Menelaus to help him,—what didst thou?
Why thou didst feign; and looking for disguise
Thy wit persuaded thee that they who knew thee
Would never deem that thou wouldest willingly
Make mock of that: so thou didst put on madness,
Babbling and scrabbling even before thy friends:
And hadst been slavering on thy native rocks
Unto this day, had not one fellow there 1110
Lightly unravelled thee, and in the furrow,
Which thou with dumb delusion, morn and eve,
Didst plough in the sea sand (that was thy trick),
He placed thy new-born babe. That thou brok'st down
Then in thine acting, that thou drav'st not on
The share thro' thine own flesh, is the best praise
I have to give thee.

UL. Distinguish ! if I feigned,
'Twas that I had a child and wife, whose ties

Of tenderness I am not ashamed to own.

ACH. I say thou wentest not unto this war 1120
 But by compulsion, thou, that chargest me
 With fear. 'Tis thou that art the stay-at-home,
 Not I ; my heart was ever for the war,
 And 'gainst my will I have been withheld: that thou
 Mistakest in this my duty for my leaning,
 Is more impeachment of thy boasted wits,
 Than was thy empty husbandry. Are not
 The Argive chiefs more subject, one and all,
 To this reproach of fear? Why need they me
 A boy of sixteen years to lead them on? 1130
 Did they lack ships or men, what are my people
 In number? who am I in strength? what rank
 Have I in Hellas? Where's the burly Ajax?
 Where is the son of Herakles? and Nestor
 The aged? Teucer and Idomeneus?
 Menestheus, Menelaus? and not least
 Where's Diomede?

DIO. (coming forward). By chance he's here.

ACH. Ah! now
 I hear a soldier's voice. Brave Diomede,
 I give thee welcome, tho' thou comest behind.
DIO. Hail, son of Thetis, champion of the Greeks!
ACH. Anon, anon. What dost thou here? Wert thou
 Sat in an ambush or arrived by chance, 1142
 As thou didst say?

DIO. By heaven I cannot tell.
 I serve Ulysses, and he serves the gods:
 If thou 'rt displeased with them, gibe not at me.

ACH. I see the plan—The pedlar here in front,
 The lion behind. And so ye thought to seize me

UL. Have we not done it?

ACH. Nay.

UL. Thou canst not scape.

ACH. I give that back to thee.

UL. What wilt thou now?

ACH. Diomede and I have swords: thou mayst stand by

1150

Until 'tis time thou show me how to escape.

I'll drive you to your ship.

UL. (*aside to DIO.*).

Answer him not. He cannot leave the isle:

When the king learns of our discovery

He must deliver him up. Let's to the palace.

DIO. (*to UL.*). Nay, I must speak—

UL. Thou wilt but anger him.

He will yield better if we cross him not.

DIO. (*to ACH.*). Brave son of Thetis, I'd not yield to thee

In any trial of strength, tho' thou be clad

In heavenly armour; but I came not here 1160

To fight, and least with thee: put up thy sword.

And since I heard thee say thou wilt to Aulis,

Our mission is accomplished, nought remains

But to renounce our acting, and atone

For what we have ventured. First I speak thee free

To follow thine own way. Unless the king

Or other here be in thy secrecy,

None know but we, nor shall know: be it thy will,

My lips are sealed, and in whatever else

Thou wilt command me I shall be glad to obey. 1170

ACH. Thank thee, good Diomede. What saith

Ulysses?

UL. I'll do whate'er will knit thee to our cause.
(Aside.) Yet shall men hear I found thee.

ACH. Return then to your ship ; and when Ulysses
 Is there restored proceed ye to the court.
 But what in the surprise and consequence
 Of my discovery to the king, as well
 As to some others may arise, I know not ;
 Nor can instruct your good behaviours further.
 Time grants me but short counsel for myself. 1180

UL. We too should study how to meet the king.

ACH. Stay yet, Ulysses. Thou hast parted here
 With goods appraised to them that meant to buy.
 I have a full purse with me. Be content,
 Take it. I'd give as much for the little sword.
 Now let me do this favour to the ladies.

UL. (taking). 'Tis fit, and fairly done. I did not
 think
 To go off robbed. The sword is worth the gold.
 We part in honest dealing. Fare thee well. 1189

DIO. (aside). Thrashed like a witless cur !
(To ACH.) Farewell, Achilles.
 An hour hence we will meet thee at the palace.

[*Exeunt UL. and DIO.*

ACH. In spite of warning taken in a silly trap,
 By the common plotter ! Thus to be known Achilles—
 To have my wish forced on me against my will
 Hath rudely cleared my sight. Where lies the gain ?
 The dancing ship on which I sailed is wrecked
 On an unlovely shore, and I must climb
 Out of the wreck upon a loveless shore,
 Saving what best I love. 'Tis so. I see

I shall command these men, and in their service 1200
 Find little solace. I have a harder task
 Than chieftainship, and how to wear my arms
 With as much nature as yon girlish robe:
 To pass from that to this without reproach
 Of honour, and beneath my breastplate keep
 With the high generalship of all the Greeks
 My tenderest love. 'Tis now to unmask that,
 And hold uninjured. I'll make no excuse
 To the old king but my necessity,
 And boldly appease him. Here by chance he comes.

Enter burriedly R. LYCOMEDES and ABAS.

LYC. Was it not here, they said? 1211
 An insolent ruffian: Let me come across him!
 By heav'n, still here! And armed from head to foot!
 (*To ACH.*) Young man,—as now thou'l not deny to be--
 Thou'st done—ay, tho' thou seem of princely make—
 Dishonour and offence to me the king
 In venturing here to parley with the princess
 In mock disguise, for whatsoever cause,
 Strangely put on and suddenly cast off,
 I am amazed to think. I bid thee tell me 1220
 What was thy purpose hither.

ACH. O honoured king,
 Tho' I came here disguised I am not he
 Thou thinkest.

LYC. Nay I think not who thou art.
 All wonders that I have seen are lost in thee.

ACH. Thou takest me for Ulysses.

LYC. Nay not I.

ACH. I am Achilles, sire, the son of Thetis.

LYC. Achilles! Ah! Thou sayst at least a name
That fits thy starlike presence, my rebuke
Not knowing who thou wert. But now I see thee
I need no witness, and forget my wonder 123c
Wherfore the Argives tarry on the shore
And the gods speak thy praise. Welcome then hither,
Achilles, son of Thetis; welcome hither!
And be I first to honour thee, who was
Most blamèd in thine absence.

ACH. Gracious sire,
Thy welcome is all kingly, if it bear
Forgiveness of offence.

LYC. To speak of that,
Another might have wronged me, but not thou.
Tho' much I crave to learn both how and why
Thou camest hither. Was't in the Argive ship? 1240

ACH. Nay, king, I came not in the Argive ship:
Nor am I that false trespasser thou seekest.

LYC. Whether then hast thou mounted from the
deep,
Where the sea nymphs till now have loved and held
thee
From men's desire; or whether from the sky
Hath some god wrapt thee in a morning cloud,
And laid thee with the sunlight on this isle,
Where they that seek should find thee?

ACH. A god it was
Brought me, but not to-day: seven times the moon
Hath lost her lamp with loitering, since the night
She shone upon my passage; and so long 1251
I have served thee in disguise, and won thy love.

LYC. So long hast thou been here! And I unknowing

Have pledged my kingly oath—The gods forbid—

ACH. Yet was I here because a goddess bade.

LYC. Have I then ever seen thee?

ACH. Every hour

Thou hast seen me, and sheltered me beneath thy roof.

But since thou knewest me not, thy royal word

Was hurt not by denial.

LYC. Who wert thou? Say.

ACH. I was called Pyrrha.

LYC. O shame.

ACH. Yet hearken, sire!

LYC. Wast thou the close attendant of my daughter,

Her favoured comrade, and she held it hid

'Neath a familiar countenance before me,

So false unto her modesty and me?

Alas! alas!

1265

ACH. O sire, she hath known me but as thou, and loved

Not knowing whom.

LYC. Thou sayst she hath not known?

ACH. For 'twas a goddess framed me this disguise.

LYC. And never guessed?

ACH. Nay, sire. Nor blame the goddess Whom I obeyed: nor where I have done no wrong, Make my necessity a crime against thee.

1271

LYC. Can I believe?

ACH. 'Tis true I have loved her, sire:

And by strange wooing if I have won her love,

And now in the discovery can but offer

A soldier's lot,—she is free to choose: but thee
First I implore, be gracious to my suit,
Nor scorn me for thy son.

LYC. My son! Achilles! This day shall be the feast-day of my year,
Tho' I be made to all men a rebuke
For being thy shelter, when I swore to all 1280
Thou wert not here. Now I rejoice thou wert.
Come to my palace as thyself: be now
My guest in earnest: we will seal at once
This happy contract.

ACH. Let me first be known
Unto the princess and bespeak her will.

LYC. She is thine, I say she is thine. Stay yet;
that pedlar,
Was he Ulysses?

ACH. So he stole upon us;
And when I bought this sword he marked me out.

LYC. I cannot brook his mastery in deceit.
Where is he now?

ACH. I sent him to the ship, 1290
To find a fit apparel for thy sight.

LYC. Would I had caught him in his mean dis-
guise!

ACH. So mayst thou yet. Come with me the
short way

And we will intercept him.

LYC. Abas, follow.
Thou too hast played a part I cannot like.

AB. My liege, I have but unwittingly obeyed.
I have no higher trust.

LYC. Now obey me. [Exeunt.

Enter DEIDAMIA and CHORUS.

DEID. Pyrrha, where art thou, Pyrrha?

CH. She turned not back.—

They are not here.—She would not fly.—

DEID. Pyrrha, Pyrrha!

1300

CH. She hath driven the ugly pedlar and his pack

Home to his ship—would we had all been by!

Would we had joined the chase!

DEID. He was no pedlar: I could see his face
When he pulled off his beard.

CH. There as she stood,
Waving the sword, I feared
To see a mortal stroke—
He hath fled into the wood—
Had he no sword too, did none spy, 1310
Beneath his ragged cloke?

DEID. Alas, alas!

CH. What hast thou found?

DEID. Woe, woe! alas, alas!

Pyrrha's robe torn, and trampled on the ground.

See! see! O misery!

CH. 'Tis hers—'tis true—we see.

DEID. Misery, misery! help who can.

CH. I have no help to give.—

I have no word to say.

1320

DEID. Gods! do I live

To see this woe? The man

Like some wild beast hath dragged her body away,
And left her robe. Ah, see the gift she spurned,
My ruby jewel to my hand returned;

When forcing my accord
She chose the fatal sword.

The fool hath quite mistook her play.

CH. He will have harmed her, if she be not slain.

Ah, Pyrrha, Pyrrha!

1330

Why ran we away?

DEID. Why stand we here?

To the rescue: follow me.

CH. Whither—our cries are vain.

Maybe she lieth now close by

And hears but cannot make reply.

'Tis told how men have bound

The mouths of them they bore away,

Lest by their cry

They should be found.—

1340

Spread our company into the woods around,

And shouting as we go keep within hail.—

Or banding in parties search the paths about:

If many together shout

The sound is of more avail.

Once more, together call her name once more.

(*Calling.*) Pyrrha—Pyrrha!

THETIS (*within*). Ha!

DEID. An answer. Heard ye not?

CH. 'Twas but the nymph, that from her hidden grot
Mocks men with the repeated syllables

1350

Of their own voice, and nothing tells.

Such sound the answer bore.

DEID. Nay, nay.

Hark, for if 'twere but echo as ye say

'Twill answer if I call again.

(*Calls.*) Pyrrha, come! Pyrrha, come!

THETIS (within). I come, I come.

DEID. Heard ye not then?

CH. I heard the selfsame sound.

DEID. 'Twas Pyrrha. Why she is found.

I know her voice. I hear her footing stir. 1360

CH. True, some one comes.

DEID. 'Tis she.

Enter THETIS.

Pyrrha! O joy.

TH. Why call ye her?

DEID. Pyrrha! Nay.

And yet so like. Alas, beseech thee, lady
Or goddess, for I think that such thou art,
Who answering from the wood our sorrowing call
Now to our sight appearest, hast thou regard
For her, whom thou so much resemblest, speak
And tell us of thy pity if yet she lives 1368
Safe and unhurt, whom we have lost and mourn.

TH. 'Tis vain to weep her, as 'twere vain to seek.
Whom think ye that ye have lost?

DEID. Pyrrha, my Pyrrha.

As late we all fled frightened by a man,
Who stole on us disguised, she stayed behind:
For when we were got safe, she was not with us.
So we returned to seek her; but alas!
Our fear is turned to terror. Lady, see!
This is her garment trampled on the ground.

TH. And so ye have found her. There was never
more

Of her ye have callèd Pyrrha than that robe.

The golden-headed maiden, the enchantress, 1380
And laughter-loving idol of your hearts

Had in your empty thought her only being.
When ye have played with her, chosen her for queen,
And leader of your games, or when ye have sat
Rapt by the music of her voice, that sang
Heroic songs and histories of the gods,
Or at brisk morn, or long-delaying eve,
Have paced the shores of sunlight hand in hand,
'Twas but a robe ye held: ye were deceived; 1389
There was no Pyrrha.

CH. What strange speech is this?
Was there no Pyrrha? What shall we believe?

DEID. Lady, thy speech troubles mine ear in vain.

TH 'Tis then thine ear is vain: and not my speech.

DEID. My ears and eyes and hands have I be-

DEID: My ears and eyes and hands have I
lied.

But not thy words. A moment since I held her

But not thy words.
What wilt thou say?

What wilt thou say?
TH. That eyes and hands and ears
Deceived thy trust, but now thou hearest truth.

DEID. Have we then dreamed, deluded by a shade
Fashioned of air or cloud, and as it seems
Made in thy likeness, or hath some god chosen 1400
To dwell awhile with us in privity
And mutual share of all our petty deeds?
Say what thy dark words hint and who thou art.

TH. I Thetis am, daughter of that old god,
Whose wisdom buried in the deep hath made
The unfathomed water solemn, and I rule
The ocean-nymphs, who for their pastime play
In the blue glooms, and darting here and there
Chequer the dark and widespread melancholy
With everlasting laughter and bright smiles. 1410

Of me thou hast heard, and of my son Achilles,
 By prescient fame renowned first of the Greeks :
 He is on this island : for 'twas here I set him
 To hide him from his foes, and he was safe
 Till thou betray'dst him—for unwittingly
 That hast thou done to-day. The seeming pedlar
 To whom thou leddest Pyrrha, was Ulysses,
 Who spied to find Achilles, and thro' thee
 Found him, alas ! Thy Pyrrha was Achilles.

CHORUS.

O daughter of Nereus old, 1420
 Queen of the nymphs that swim
 By day in gleams of gold,
 By night in the silver dim,
 Forgive in pity, we pray,
 Forgive the ill we have done.
 Why didst thou hide this thing from us ?
 For if we had known thy son
 We had guarded him well to-day,
 Nor ever betrayed him thus.
 For though we may not ride 1430
 Thy tall sea-horses nor play
 In the rainbow-tinted spray,
 Nor dive down under the tide
 To the secret caves of the main,
 Among thy laughing train ;
 Yet had we served thee well as they,
 Had we thy secret shared :
 Nor ever had lost from garden and hall
 Pyrrha the golden-haired,
 Pyrrha beloved of all. 1440

TH. (*to DEID.*) Dost thou say nought?

DEID. Alas, alas ! my Pyrrha.

TH. Art thou lamenting still to have lost thy maid?

DEID. I need no tongue to cry my shame; and yet
Thy mockery doth not grieve me like my loss.

TH. I came not here to mock thee, and forbid
Thy grief, that doth dishonour to my son.

DEID. Nay, nay, that word is mine: speak it no more.

TH. Weepest thou at comfort? Is deceit so dear
To mortals, that to know good cannot match
The joy of a delusion whatsoe'er? 1450

DEID. What joy was mine shame must forbid to tell.

TH. Gods count it shame to be deceived: but men
Are shamed not by delusion of the gods.

DEID. Then ye know nothing or do not respect.

TH. Why what is this thou makest? the more ye
have loved

The more have ye delighted, and the joy
I never grudged thee; tho' there was not one
In all my company of sea-born nymphs,
Who did not daily pray me, with white arms
Raised in the blue, to let her guard my son. 1460
And for his birthright he might well have taken
The service of their sportive train, and lived
On some fair desert isle away from men
Like a young god in worship and gay love.
But since he is mortal, for his mortal mate
I chose out thee; to whom now were he lost.
I would not blame thy well-deservèd tears:
But lo, I am come to give thee joy, to call
Thee daughter, and prepare thee for the sight
Of such a lover, as no lady yet 1470

Hath sat to await in chamber or in bower
 On any walled hill or isle of Greece ;
 Nor yet in Asian cities, whose dark queens
 Look from the latticed casements over seas
 Of hanging gardens ; nor doth all the world
 Hold a memorial ; not where *Ægypt* mirrors
 The great smile of her kings and sunsmitten fanes
 In timeless silence : none hath been like him ;
 And all the giant stones, which men have piled
 Upon the illustrious dead, shall crumble and join 1480
 The desert dust, ere his high dirging Muse
 Be dispossessed of the throne of song.

Await him here. While I thy willing maids
 Will lead apart, that they may learn what share
 To take in thy rejoicing. Follow me !

CH. Come, come—we follow—we obey thee gladly—
 We long to learn, goddess, what thou canst teach.

[*Exeunt TH. and CHOR.*]

DEID. Rejoice, she bids me. Ah me, tho' all
 heaven spake,
 I should weep bitterly. My tears, my shame
 Will never leave me. Never now, nevermore 1490
 Can I find credit of grace, nor as a rock
 Stand 'twixt my maids and evil ; even not deserving
 My father's smile. Why honour we the gods,
 Who reck not of our honour ? How hath she,
 Self-styled a goddess, mocked me, not respecting
 Maidenly modesty ; but in the path
 Of grace, wherein I thought to walk enstated
 High as my rank without reproach, she hath set
 A snare for every step ; that day by day

From morn to night, I might do nothing well; 1500
 But by most innocent seeming be betrayed
 To what most wounds a shamefast life, yielding
 To a man's unfeignèd feigning; nay nor stayed
 Until I had given,—alas, how oft!—
 My cheek to his lips, my body to his arms;
 And thinking him a maid as I myself,
 Have loved, kissed, and embraced him as a maid.
 O wretched, not to have seen what was so plain!
 Here on this bank no later than this morn
 Was I beguiled. There is no cure, no cure. 1510
 I'll close my eyes for ever, nor see again
 The things I have seen, nor be what I have been.

[Covers her face weeping.

Enter ACHILLES.

ACH. The voices that were here have ceased.

Ah, there!

Not gone. 'Tis she, and by my cast-off robe
 Sitting alone. I must speak comfort to her,
 Whoe'er I seem. O Deidamia, see!
 Pyrrha is found. Weep not for her. I tell thee
 Thy Pyrrha is safe. Despair not. Nay, look up.
 Dost thou not know my voice? 'Tis I myself. 1519
 Look up, I am Pyrrha.—Ah, now what prayer or plea
 Made on my knees can aid me—If thou knowst all
 And wilt not look on me? Yet if thou hearest
 Thou wilt forgive. Nay, if thou lovedst me not,
 Or if I had wronged thee, thou wouldest scorn me now.
 Thou dost not look. I am not changed. I loved thee
 As like a maiden as I knew: if more
 Was that a fault? Now as I am Achilles

Revealed to-day to lead the Greeks to Troy,
 I count that nothing and bow down to thee
 Who hast made me fear,— 1530
 Let me unveil thy eyes: tho' thou wouldest hide me,
 Hide not thyself from me. If gentle force
 Should show me that 'tis love that thou wouldest hide . . .
 And love I see. Look on me.

DEID. (*embracing*). Ah Pyrrha, Pyrrha!

ACH. Thou dost forgive.

DEID. I never dreamed the truth.

ACH. And wilt not now look on me!

DEID. I dare not look.

ACH. What dost thou fear? A monster! I am
 not changed

Save but my dress, and that an Amazon
 Might wear.

DEID. O, I see all.

ACH. But who hath told thee?

DEID. There came one here much like thee
 when we called, 1540

Who said she was a goddess and thy mother.

ACH. 'Twas she that hid me in my strange disguise,
 Fearing the oracle.

DEID. She praised thee well,
 And said that thou wouldest come . . .

ACH. What didst thou fear,
 Hiding thine eyes?

DEID. I cannot speak the name.
 Be Pyrrha still.

ACH. Be that my name with thee.
 Yet hath thy father called me son Achilles.

DEID. He knows?

ACH. There's nought to hide: but let us
hence.

He is coming hither, and with him my foe.
Let them not find us thus, and thee in tears. 1550
[*Exeunt.*]

Enter LYCOMEDES, ULYSSES, DIOMEDE, and ABAS.

LYC. It may be so, or it may not be so:
You have done me an honest service 'gainst your
will,
And must not wrest it to a false conclusion.
I bid you be my guests, and with your presence
Honour the marriage, which ye have brought about.
Ye need not tarry long.

UL. Each hour is long
Which holds the Argive ships chained to the shore.
This is no time for marriage.

LYC. There's time for all;
A time for wooing and a time for warring:
And such a feast of joy as offers now 1560
Ye shall not often see. Scyros shall show you
What memory may delight in 'twixt the frays
Of bloody battle.

DIO. I am not made for feasts.
I join the cry to arms. But make your bridal
To-night, and I'll abide it.

LYC. I'll have 't to-night.
So shall Achilles' finding and his wedding
Be on one day. And hark! there's music tells me
That others guess my mind.

Enter CHORUS with ACH. and DEID. following.

CHORUS.

Now the glorious sun is sunk in the west,
And night with shadowy step advances: 1570
As we,—to the newly betrothed our song addrest,
With musical verse and dances,
In the order of them who established rites of old
For maidens to sing this song,—
Pray the gifts of heaven to gifts of gold,
Joy and a life long.

ACH. Good king and father, see thy daughter come
To hear thee call me son.

LYC. Son if I call thee,
I understand not yet, and scarce believe 1579
The wonders of this day. And thou, my daughter,
Ever my pride and prayer, hast far outrun
My hope of thy good fortune. Blessed be ye both:
The gods have made your marriage; let the feast
Be solemnized to-night; our good guests here
Whose zeal hath caused our joy, I have bid to share it.

CHORUS.

We live well-ruled by an honoured king,
Beloved of the gods, in a happy isle;
Where merry winds of the gay sea bring
No foe to our shore, and the heavens smile
On a peaceful folk secure from fear, 1590
Who gather the fruits of the earth at will,
And hymn their thanks to the gods, and rear
Their laughing babes unmindful of ill.

And ever we keep a feast of delight,
 The betrothal of hearts, when spirits unite,
 Creating an offspring of joy, a treasure
 Unknown to the bad, for whom
 The gods foredoom
 The glitter of pleasure,
 And a dark tomb.

1600

Blessèd therefore O newly betrothed are ye,
 Tho' happy to-day ye be,
 Your happier times ye yet shall see.

We make our prayer to the gods.

The sun shall prosper the seasons' yield
 With fuller crops for the wains to bear,
 And feed our flocks in fold and field
 With wholesome water and sweetest air.
 Plenty shall empty her golden horn,
 And grace shall dwell on the brows of youth, 1610
 And love shall come as the joy of morn,
 To waken the eyes of pride and truth.

Blessèd therefore thy happy folk are we.
 Tho' happy to-day we be,
 Our happier times are yet to see.

We render praise to the gods;

But chiefest of all in the highest height
 To Love that sitteth in timeless might,
 That tameth evil, and sorrow ceaseth.

And now we wish you again,
 Again and again,
 His joy that encreaseth,
 And a long reign.

1620

ACH. Stay, stay! and thou, good king, and all here, hear me.

I would be measured by my best desire,
 And that's for peace and love, and the delights
 Your song hath augured: but to all men fate
 Apportions a mixed lot, and 'twas for me
 Foreseen that peace and honour lay apart,
 Wherever pleasure: and to-day's event 1630
 Questions your hope. I was for this revealed,
 To lead the Argive battle against Troy:
 Thither I go; whence to return or not
 Is out of sight, but yet my marriage-making
 Enters with better promise on my life
 Thus hand in hand with glorious enterprise.
 After some days among you I must away,
 Tho' 'tis not far.

UL. Well said! So art thou bound.

DIO. The war that hung so long will now begin.

LYC. I ask one month, Achilles: grant one moon:
 They that could wait so long may longer wait.

CHORUS.

I.

Go not, go not, Achilles; is all in vain?
 Is this the fulfilment of long delight,
 The promise of favouring heaven,
 The praise of our song,
 The choice of Thetis for thee,
 Thy merry disguise,
 And happy betrothal?

We pray thee, O we beseech thee, all,
 Son of Thetis, we counsel well, 1650
 Do not thy bride this wrong.

2.

For if to-day thou goest, thou wilt go far,
 Alas from us thy comrades away,
 To a camp of revengeful men,
 The accursed war
 By warning fate forbidden,
 To angry disdain,
 A death unworthy.

We pray thee, O we beseech thec, all,
 Son of Peleus, we counsel well,

1660

This doom the oracle told.

LYC. What said the oracle?

ACH. It darkly boded
 That glory should be death.

LYC. And so may be:
 Nay, very like. Yet men who would live well,
 Weigh not these riddles, but unfold their life
 From day to day. Do thou as seemeth best,
 Nor fear mysterious warnings of the powers.
 But, if my voice can reckon with thee at all,
 I'll tell thee what myself I have grown to think:
 That the best life is oft inglorious.

1670

Since the perfecting of ourselves, which seems
 Our noblest task, may closerlier be pursued
 Away from camps and cities and the mart
 Of men, where fame, as it is called, is won,
 By strife, ambition, competition, fashion,
 Ay, and the prattle of wit, the deadliest foe
 To sober holiness, which, as I think,
 Loves quiet homes, where nature laps us round

With musical silence and the happy sights
That never fret; and day by day the spirit 1680
Pastures in liberty, with a wide range
Of peaceful meditation, undisturbed.
All which can Scyros offer if thou wilt.—

UL. This speech is idle, thou art bound to me.

ACH. I hear you all: and lest it should be said
I once was harsh and heedless, where such wrong
Were worse than cowardice, I now recall
Whate'er I have said. I will not forth to Troy:
I will abide in Scyros, and o'erlook
The farms and vineyards, and be lessoned well 1690
In government of arts, and spend my life
In love and ease, and whatsoever else
Our good king here hath praised—I will do this
If my bride bid me. Let her choose for me;
Her word shall rule me. If she set our pleasure
Above my honour, I will call that duty,
And make it honourable, and so do well.
But, as I know her, if she bid me go
Where fate and danger call; then I will go,
And so do better: and very sure it is, 1700
Pleasure is not for him who pleasure serves.

DEID. Achilles, son of Thetis! As I love thee
I say, go forth to Troy.

ACH. Praised be the Gods,
Who have made my long desire my love's command!

CH. Alas! We have no further plea. Alas! Her ever-venturous spirit forecasts no ill.

LYC. Go, win thy fame, my son; I would not stay thee.

Thou art a soldier born. But circumstance

Demands delay, which thou wilt grant.

ACH.

And thus,

To-night may be the feast. To-morrow morn 1710
Do thou, Ulysses, sail to Aulis, there
Prepare them for my coming. If, Diomede,
Thou wilt to Achaia to collect my men,
The time thou usest I can fitly spend,
And for some days banish the thought of war.

DIO. I will go for thee, prince.

LYC.

'Tis settled so.

Stand we no longer here: night falls apace.

Come to the palace, we will end this day,

As it deserves, never to be forgot.

1719

NOTE.

*This edition is a reprint of the first, with the exception
of two corrections made in lines 731 and 1407.*

R. B.

1892

OXFORD: HORACE HART
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